OMAMORI HIMARI

9

PARENTAL ADVISORY
WARNING
EXPLICIT CONTENT

MILAN MATRA

OMAMORI HIMARI
9

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

HIMARI

A CAT AYAKASHI WHO SUDDENLY APPEARED BEFORE YUUTO TO SERVE AS HIS BODYGUARD. SHE WORRIES OVER YUUTO'S PRESENT STATE AS A DEMON SLAYER AND HER OWN PREPARATION FOR IT.

YUUTO

THE HERO OF THIS STORY. HE'S YOUR TYPICAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT, EXCEPT FOR THE FACT THAT HE'S THE CURRENT DEMON SLAYER OF THE "AMAKAWA FAMILY." HE HAS MADE UP HIS MIND TO BECOME A DEMON SLAYER AND HAS REPELLED AYAKASHI IN CONFRONTATIONS WITH HIS "LIGHT FERRY."

RINKO

YUUTO'S CHILDHOOD FRIEND. SHE'S LOOKED AFTER YUUTO LIKE A SIBLING SINCE SHE WAS LITTLE, BUT EVER SINCE HIMARI SHOWED UP, SHE'S STARTED SEEING HIM MORE AS A "MAN."

HITSUGI YAKOUIN

THE CURRENT HEAD OF THE YAKOUIN FAMILY, ONE OF THE TWELVE DEMON-SLAYER FAMILIES. SHE CAN SEE INTO THE FUTURE AND WORKS AS A SELF-PROCLAIMED BEAUTIFUL PSYCHIC DETECTIVE.

CLASS PRESIDENT

YUUTO'S CLASSMATE AND THE CLASS PRESIDENT. HER NAME IS YUU SHIMAMURA. SHE'S A TOP STUDENT AND AN OTAKU HOBBYIST.

TAMA (THE FAIR NINE-TAILED FOX)

ONE OF JAPAN'S TOP THREE DEMONS, THOUGH STILL ONLY FRAGMENTED. SHE'S WORKING WITH SHUTEN-DOUJI TO EAT AYAKASHI WHILE KEEPING AN EYE ON HIMARI AND COMPANY.

KUESU JINGUUJI

HEIRESS TO ONE OF THE TWELVE DEMON-SLAYER FAMILIES, THE JINGUUJI, AND YUUTO'S BETROTHED. IN THE PAST, SHE CAME IN CONTACT WITH A TREASURY OF TRUTH AND ENORMOUS KNOWLEDGE.

SHIZUKU

AN AYAKASHI WHO MANIPULATES WATER. SHE TRACKED DOWN A DESCENDANT OF THE JIBASHIRI FAMILY THAT MASSACRED HER CLAN AND FELL INTO AN ABYSS OF BLIND RAGE BUT WAS SAVED BY YUUTO'S WORDS AND REGAINED HER SENSES.

LIZLET L. CHELSIE

LIZ FOR SHORT, THIS YOUNG GIRL WORKS AT THE CAFÉ WHERE HIMARI WORKS PART-TIME, BUT HER TRUE FORM IS A TSUKUMOGAMI—A TEACUP THAT HAS COME TO LIFE. SHE'S FOND OF YUUTO AND CALLS HIM HER "SPECIAL CUSTOMER."

THE STORY SO FAR

YUUTO AMAKAWA IS A HIGH SCHOOLER WITH A SEVERE ALLERGY TO CATS. WHO SHOULD APPEAR BEFORE HIM ONE DAY OTHER THAN A FELINE AYAKASHI, HIMARI?

"I WILL PROTECT YOU, YOUNG LORD."

SUCH IS THE PROCLAMATION MADE BY HIMARI, HAVING BEEN GIVEN THE DUTY OF PROTECTING YUUTO, THANKS TO A PLEDGE MADE LONG AGO. BUT YUUTO ALSO HAS TO DEAL WITH HIS NEIGHBOR AND CHILDHOOD FRIEND, RINKO, AS WELL AS THE AYAKASHI SHIZUKU, WHO WAS SWAYED BY YUUTO'S KINDNESS AND DECIDED TO LIVE WITH HIM. WITH ALL THESE GIRLS IN HIS LIFE, YUUTO'S DAYS QUICKLY BECOME OFF-THE-WALL AND FULL OF FUN WITH NO END OF SURPRISES.

"THE SUPER☆MOBILE ANGEL, KUESU JINGUUJI-SAMA, HAS MADE HER ENTRANCE!!"

JOINING FORCES WITH KUESU, WHO APPEARS LIKE A SHOOTING STAR, THE GANG DRIVES AWAY THE NINE-TAILS AND MANAGES TO AVERT A CRISIS.

SOON, FINAL-EXAM SEASON IS UPON THEM. BUT WHEN RUMORS OF A GHOST ON SCHOOL GROUNDS START UP, YUUTO IS FORCED TO USE THE SITUATION TO TEST HIS DEMON-SLAYER SKILLS AND SOLVE THE MYSTERY WITH HIMARI, RINKO, AND THE CLASS PRESIDENT.

ONCE INSIDE THE SCHOOL, THE GROUP SPLITS UP INTO TWO TEAMS, YUUTO PAIRING OFF WITH KUESU, TO INVESTIGATE EACH CLASSROOM.

"...SO THIS IS HOW YUU-CHAN, RINKO-SAN, AND EVERYONE ELSE SPENDS THEIR DAYS. IT'S SO FAR FROM THE WORLD I LIVE IN—BUT NOW YOU'RE ON MY SIDE, YUU-CHAN."

MEANWHILE, HIMARI'S TEAM MAKES PROGRESS, CUTTING DOWN GHOSTS ALONG THE WAY. WHEN THE TWO GROUPS ARE FINALLY REUNITED, THEY FIND SHUTEN-DOUJI AWAITING THEM. IT TURNS OUT THAT HE HAS TAKEN IT UPON HIMSELF TO HUNT DOWN THE MISSING FRAGMENTS WITHOUT TAMAMO-NO-MAE.

YUUTO'S A LITTLE UNNERVED WHEN HIMARI URGES HIM TO CUT SHUTEN DOWN, BUT...

"IF YOU CRUSH HIM...I WILL DO SOMETHING EVEN NICER FOR YOU."

WHEN SHE PLANTS A PASSIONATE KISS ON HIS LIPS, YUUTO CHALLENGES SHUTEN-DOUJI. BUT SHUTEN TAKES ADVANTAGE OF AN OPENING AND MANAGES TO NAB HIMARI.

"TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING, PROTECT SOMEONE—OR WIN FOR THAT MATTER—WITH SUCH SLOPPY RESOLVE MAKES ME LAUGH."

YUUTO IS THEN THOROUGHLY THRASHED BY SHUTEN-DOUJI AND LAMENTS HIS POWERLESSNESS. THAT'S WHEN HIMARI COMFORTS HIM, INITIATING AN INTIMATE MOMENT BETWEEN THE TWO.

MEANWHILE, THE CLASS PRESIDENT COMES ACROSS THE NINE-TAILS COLLAPSED IN THE ROAD AND TAKES HER HOME...!?

YOU ARE ALREADY ONE OF US.
THAT PATHETIC EXAMPLE OF RESOLVE MAKES ME LAUGH.
THERE ARE DEATH TRAPS ALL AROUND YOU.
DEMON SLAYERS ARE EVIL... YOU KNOW.
I DON'T CARE ABOUT WHAT'S CONVE-NIENT FOR YOU.
I'M NOT A PEST. I'M NOT, YOU HEAR!?
WHO WILL BE MADE KING? IS IT YOU?
SO WHY DOES EVERYONE DOUBT ME SO MUCH?
WAIT! I'VE MADE UP MY MIND!
I WILL FOR-EVER BE HERE FOR YOU.
HIMARI...
WORRY NOT. YOU ARE NOT ALONE.
INDEED. YOUR COMMIT-MENT AND PRIDE GIVE ME GREAT FAITH, YOUNG LORD.
MENAGERIE 49:
CAT ON A DOWNWARD SPIRAL

AH...
SINCE LONG AGO, YOU AND I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN TOGETH-ER.
むに
MUNI
むに
MUNI
むに
MUNI (SQUISH)
MM ...
HIMARI.

MENAGERIE 49: CAT ON A DOWNWARD SPIRAL

HAA-AAH...
MYAH...
NN... NN.
MOSO (SQUIRM)
もそ...
NN...
URK...!?
CAT...
HAAH!
HAAH!
...
GUSU (SNIFFLE)
...WHAT?
ZURU (SLIP)
BIKUN (JOLT)
EE...

LOOK, UH! HI-MARI, I DIDN'T MEAN ...
DON'T TELL ME I...
.....
... MM-HM...
I...
I'M SORRY.
DOKA (THWACK)
KUCHI (SNAP)

どどぉおおおお
DOZAAAA (GUUUUUSH)
WAIT, HIMARI! THE WAY YOU SAY "IT" SOUNDS SUSPICIOUS!
MROWR!
IF YOU ARE GOING TO MAKE A MOVE, THEN JUST GET ON WITH IT!!
IT'S PURIFYING WATER... YOU KNOW.
WASH AWAY THOSE IMPURE THOUGHTS AND COME DOWN FOR BREAKFAST...YOU KNOW.
PICHON (DRIP)
ぴちょん
SHITTORI (SOAKED)
しっとり
UH ...
SHAPAA (BLOOP)
しゃぱあ

SFX: MOKU (CHEW) MOKU

E-EGGS!?
SQUEEEK!
BFFFT!
ぶぅぅぅ
...WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR EGGS...
...I WOULD BE MORE THAN HAPPY TO BEAR THEM FOR YOU... YOU KNOW.
(GATATA CLATTER)
CAT, GO AND SHARPEN YOUR BLADE FOR ALL I CARE...YOU KNOW.
THANK YOU FOR THE MEAL!!
I NEED NOT TELL YOU TODAY I WILL BE PARTAKING IN TRAINING.
NO, HIMARI, TODAY'S THE FIRST DAY OF THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR!
IT IS MERELY AN ASSEMBLY FOR LISTENING TO THE PRINCIPAL'S ONEROUS SPEECH.
ALL WILL BE WELL.
I HAVE A DUTY TO BE STRONG!
CHIK! (CHINK)
...

SO SHALL IT BE.
THE DIVIDING OF CLASSES IS OF NO CONCERN TO ME.
THE YOUNG LORD AND MYSELF, AS WELL AS RINKO AND THE OTHERS, WILL BE IN THE SAME CLASS ONCE MORE.
HEH-HEH-HEH. NICE WORK, CAT PRINCESS.
WE REALLY ALL ARE IN THE EXACT SAME CLASS.
—SHE CALLED IT.
BUT ACTUALLY... IT'S DOWNRIGHT SCARY.
A SPELL TO MAKE PEOPLE THINK IT'S NORMAL...
IT'S PRACTICALLY THE SAME AS BEING ABLE TO MANIPULATE PEOPLE'S PSYCHES.

WELL, WELL. THEN CAN YOU MAKE YUUTO DO WHATEVER YOU WANT, SHIZUKU?
THAT REMINDS ME. JUST LOOKING INTO AGEHA'S EYES MADE ME BLACK OUT.
...IF I TRIED, I COULD... YOU KNOW.
FOR EXAMPLE, WE COULD MAKE A PERSON THINK A TREE HAD KIDNAPPED THEM...
...THAT'S HOW SIMPLE IT IS FOR US SUPERNATURAL BEINGS KNOWN AS AYAKASHI TO TRICK THE MINDS OF HUMANS... YOU KNOW.
...BUT THEN THERE WOULD BE NO POINT... YOU KNOW.
HRM...
THERE Y'ARE! YO, YUUTO!

WE'RE IN THE SAME CLASS AGAIIIN! JUST THINKING ABOUT ONE MORE YEAR OF WITNESSING ALL THE CHICKS FALLIN' AT YOUR FEET GETS ME DOWN!
WHAT DID YOU SAY!?
ARE YOU SURE YOU OUGHTA SAY THAT? I KNOW, OKAY?
HARU-CHAN'S GOING TO OUR SCHOOL, RIGHT?
URK!
H-HEY THERE, SHI-ZUKU-CHAN. KUZAKI-SAN.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
THEY BROUGHT ME HERE AS MY GUARDIANS... YOU KNOW.
I GO HERE. WHAT ARE YOU, DENSE?
AMA-KAWA... SENPAI! KUZAKI-SENPAI! MORNIN'!!
YAHOO!!
FUNYU (SMOOSH)
BOFU (POOMF)
WHOA!
H-HARU-CHAN.
LONG TIME, NO SEE
LISTEN TO THIS, KUZAKI-SENPAI!
BIG BRO IGNORED HIS CUTE KID SISTER AND LEFT FOR SCHOOL WITHOUT ME!
HE GETS SO MAD WHEN I TRY TO GLOMP HIM LIKE THIS

OF COURSE. HARU-CHAN, THE SCHOOL UNIFORM LOOKS GREAT ON YOU. IT'S VERY CUTE.
I WON'T SUGGEST YOU COMMIT THE TABOO OF HITTING ON YOUR BESTIE'S LITTLE SIS, BUT AT LEAST SAY SOMETHING NICE ABOUT ME IN MY MOMENT OF TRIUMPH!
HITTING ON HIS LITTLE SISTER.
EAT YER HEART OUT!
UH, YOU DON'T HAVE TO YELL IT...
THAT'S MY AMAKAWA! YOU LADY-KILLER!!
THAT'S IT! THAT'S THE REACTION I'M GOIN' FOR!!
YOU CHARACTER, YOU!
I'M SORRY, YUUTO... I FEEL I SHOULD APOLOGIZE.
PIRA (FLAP)
HEY, YOU'RE THAT LITTLE SQUIRT FROM THE OTHER DAY.
YOU NEW HERE TOO?
I'M ...

.....

.....
SAY WHAT? COOOOL.
...JUST AN AYA-KASHI, YOU KNOW.

GET LOST, WOULD YOU!!?
ALL THE GIRLS FROM MY JUNIOR HIGH KEEP PESTERING ME WITH, "INTRODUCE US TO YOUR OLDER BROTHER! ♡," YA KNOW!
ALL RIGHT ALREADY! THAT'S ENOUGH, SO AM-SCRAY!
GUI
GUI (SHOVE)
TCH! FINE!
BUT AT LEAST COME FIND ME LATER!
WOOOW. MASAKI-KUN, I'M SUR-PRISED.
OH, MAN
YOU'RE PRETTY POPULAR IN THE LOWER GRADES, TAIZOU.
.....

RINKO KUZAKI

AI KOGURE

SATOE SATOU

YUU SHIMAMURA

BESIDES, I'M NO LONGER ...
...THE CLASS PRESI-DENT OF FIRST-YEAR CLASS B.
SOMEBODY ELSE WILL BE CLASS PRESIDENT OF SECOND-YEAR CLASS A.
NOPE, I'M PRETTY SURE IT'LL BE YOU AGAIN.
WITH GREAT DETERMI-NATION
BY THE WAY...
ZA (RUSTLE)
ZA
ZA
!
...WHERE'S NOIHARA-SAN?
UH ...
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, I HAVEN'T SEEN HER TODAY.

AMA-KAWA-KUN.
OH! YEAH! THE TRADITIONAL FELINE SWORDS-WOMAN CALLED TO SAY SHE WASN'T FEELING WELL!!
AW, THAT'S A SHAME.
GAZE UPON HER RACK AGAIN, I'LL
IF I CAN'T...

I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S MY PLACE TO SAY THIS, BUT...
...GOOD LUCK.
I'M SURE IT'S BEEN TOUGH WITH ALL THAT'S GONE ON WITH YOUR HOME LIFE.

UM, THANKS.
RIGHT ...

OH, THE BELL.
WELL, LET'S HEAD TO OUR NEW CLASS-ROOM.
KONNN (DONNNG)
KIIN (DIING)
YEAH. SEE YOU LATER, SHIZUKU-CHAN!
...I GOTTA SAY, YUUTO'S PRETTY INCRED-IBLE.
ZA (SKF)
I HAVE PARENTS AND A SISTER, BUT...
...HE'S GOT NO ONE. BUT YOU'D NEVER BE ABLE TO GUESS HE WAS TOTALLY ALONE.
TRUE ...
...BUT HE DOES HAVE SOME-THING.
SOME-ONE.
YEAH, BUT...
...THE CLASS PRESIDENT'S ACTING ALL NORMAL DESPITE WHAT HAPPENED...
...SOME-THING SEEMS OFF ABOUT HER.
!

AND EVER SINCE THAT GHOST CASE, SHE'S STOPPED UPDATING HER BLOG.
IT'S A SUBTLE CHANGE.
OFF, HOW ...?
EVEN WITH EXAMS AND GRINDING TO LEVEL UP IN THAT NEW RPG...
...SHE'S NEVER FALLEN BEHIND ON HER POSTS.
WELL, IT'S NOT LIKE SHE'S DIRECTLY INVOLVED WITH YOU, YUUTO.
LEAVE HER TO ME!
YOU DON'T SAY ...?
OKAY, I WILL... THANKS, RINKO.

FU-FU-FU. I'M THE GREAT RINKO.
I'M IN A CLASS BY MYSELF WHEN IT COMES TO SUPPORTING YOU, YUUTO.
HMPH. RINKO'S ONE TO TALK...
SHI-ZUKU?
SO CHEEKY, YOU KNOW
I'LL GO HOME AFTER I'VE TAKEN A ROUND HERE AT THE SCHOOL... YOU KNOW.
PLACES FULL OF YOUNG PEOPLE TEND TO ATTRACT AYAKASHI.
BUT THIS IS THE CAT'S JOB... YOU KNOW.
HIMARI.

ZA
(SSHHH)
ZA
ZA
PI
(ZIP)

—IF I CAN MAKE MY HEART AS TRANQUIL AS A MIRROR, MY SWORD STROKES WILL NOT WAVER.
CHIN (CHNK)
TRAN-QUIL?
WHAT PART?
BUT NOW—
THE ADVANCES EVEN CAME FROM MY SIDE.
SIMPLY BEING SKIN TO SKIN WITH THE YOUNG LORD GAVE ME SUCH JOY.
YOUNG LORD...
'TWAS NOT ALWAYS THUS.

WHEN THE YOUNG LORD LAYS A HAND ON ME, I FEEL HAPPINESS AND AT THE SAME TIME...
...FEAR.
THOUGH I LONG FOR HIM TO TOUCH ME MORE...
...THERE IS A PART OF ME THAT HESITATES.
—I COULD NOT POSSIBLY FEAR THE YOUNG LORD.
HE HAS ONLY EVER BEEN KIND TOWARD ME.
AND YET...

四月
...IT IS THAT VERY SAME KIND-NESS ...
...THAT SCARES ME.

—IN THE PAST, THE DIVINE ENERGY REPULSED ME...
...RENDERING ME UNABLE TO TREAD ON THESE GROUNDS.
HAVE I GROWN SO STRONG?
OR AM I BEING RECEIVED NOW?

ZAZAZAZAZA (SSSSHHH)
THEN I PRAY...
...THAT I MAY MAKE THE YOUNG LORD'S DREAMS COME TRUE.
UNTIL THIS BODY IS NO MORE, TILL THE END OF TIME.
HOWEVER...
(WHOOSH)
ワ
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ー
ン
...MAY MY WISH TOO BE FULFILLED.
AND IF IT CAN BE SO...

DERIDE ME NOT, YE WHO HAVE PASSED BEFORE ME.
FU-FU! SO MY WISH IS ASKING FOR TOO MUCH.
MY HANDS ARE STAINED WITH BLOOD, AND I CANNOT EVEN COUNT THE BODIES I HAVE FELLED—
BELIEVE ME, I KNOW.

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME, MA'AM. THANK YOU FOR HAVING ME OVER.
PEKO (BOW)
OH, WELCOME, RINKO-CHAN.
SORRY FOR SUDDENLY INVITING MYSELF OVER LIKE THIS.
NOT AT ALL. COME ON IN.
YUU, I DON'T MIND IF YOU TWO HANG OUT, BUT TRY NOT TO BOTHER TAMA-SAMA.
TON (TMP)
WE WON'T.
TON
SIGN. YUU
TAMA-SAMA?
IF YOU HAVE FAMILY OVER, I CAN COME ANOTHER TIME.
WOW, YOU CALL YOUR RELATIVES "-SAMA."
DON'T WORRY. SHE'S A QUIET KIND OF PERSON, BUT...
...I'M SURE SHE'LL LIKE YOU, RINKO. ♡
CHA (CHAK)

BOX: WITH OUT-OF-THIS-WORLD DELICIOUSNESS! / MATRA EXPLOSION!

BOTTLE: JUST A LI'L TEA / BAG: CHOCOLATE

MENAGERIE 50: BALLAD OF THE MIXED-UP KITTY

MENAGERIE 50: BALLAD OF THE MIXED-UP KITTY

...I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY HAD AN UNOFFICIAL CLUB MEMBER PERFORM FOR THE NEW STUDENT WELCOMING CEREMONY.
I WONDER HOW THE KENDO CLUB FEELS.
YOU'RE ONE TO TALK, RINKO.
YOU'VE COMPETED IN TOURNAMENTS AS A STAND-IN BEFORE
OOOOH
IT'S PERFECT! THE JAPANESE GARB! A BEAUTIFUL GIRL WITH LONG, BLACK HAIR! THE WAY HER BOOBS BOB WITH EVERY STROKE OF HER SWORD!
THEY SHOULD BE PROUD!!
IT REALLY IS SOME-THING ELSE!
GU! (CLENCH)
WITH NO ASSO-CIATION TO A GROUP, SHE IS A "SAMURAI" WHO SERVES ONLY ONE MAN...
LIKE RINKO, THE TEAMLESS PLAYER HERSELF, AT FIRST GLANCE, BUT QUITE DIFFERENT IN NATURE.
.....!!
CLASS PRESI-DENT?
WHAT'S THE MATTER ?
HAAH... INDEED.

AMAKAWA-KUN, MAKE SURE NOIHARA-SAN IS PRESENT FOR NEXT WEEK'S PHYSICAL EXAM AND MEDICAL CHECKUP. UNDERSTOOD?
WH-WHY'S IT MY RESPONSIBILITY?
BY SOME CONSPIRACY, I'VE BEEN ELECTED CLASS PRESIDENT YET AGAIN.
WHICH PUTS ME IN A POSITION OF HAVING TO CARE ABOUT WHAT GOES ON IN MY CLASS...
...BECAUSE YOU AND NOIHARA-SAN...
BOSO (MUTTER)
ぼそ…
...ARE AN ITEM, AREN'T YOU?
.....
NOT TRUE! WHERE'D YOU GET THAT IDEA, PRESIDENT!?
...HUH? DID I SAY SOMETHING?
UH...

PIKO
PIKO (BOOP)
...
— WELL, I'M GOING TO GO GET CHANGED.
...WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO PULL HERE?
HM?
?
...WHO ARE YOU?
YOU CAN WAIT HERE.
FROM THAT ONE TIME.
...AH.
GUESS I SHOULDA HURLED A SPIKED BAT INSTEAD OF A MOP AT YOU!
OH, I SEE. I'M SO PLAIN, YOU DON'T REMEMBER ME.

HIMARI AND THE OTHERS ARE ALWAYS TELLING ME NOT TO LOOK INTO THE EYES OF ENEMY AYAKASHI!
NOW ANSWER THE QUESTION!
...WHY DON'T YOU LOOK AT ME?
ENOUGH ABOUT ME! WHAT DID YOU DO TO THE PREZ!?
WHAT'RE YOU SCHEMING!?
IT'S JUST AS YOU SEE.
I'VE PUT A SPELL ON THE HUMANS OF THIS HOME TO CONTROL THEM.
BUT NOW I GET IT...
!
YOU'RE WITH THAT YOUNG BOY AND THE CAT MONSTER...
THAT'S SPLENDID.
NII (LEER)

ARE YOU GONNA USE THE PREZ AND HER FAMILY AS A SHIELD!?
GASHI (GRAB)
GYU (GRIP)
IT... CAN'T BE...
AND NOT JUST YOU, BUT YOUR LITTLE FRIEND TOO.
...IT WOULD BE WISE FOR YOU TO ACT PRUDENTLY. I CAN KILL A HUMAN JUST BY EMITTING WAVES OF OFFENSIVE POWER.
THOUGH TRIVIAL, I'VE ALLOWED FOR YOUR EXISTENCE. YOUR LIFE IS IN MY HANDS.
SO UNTIL I DECIDE TO EAT YOU OR NOT, YOU SHOULD ENJOY THE RIDE.
POKI (SNAP)
UH...
SU (SWF)
NOW, NOW. HAVE SOME CANDY AND SETTLE DOWN.

WHAT DO I DO? WHAT SHOULD I DO?
WHAT CAN I DO?
SHE EVEN FELL ASLEEP TOWARD THE END.
AFTER THAT, WHILE THE PREZ AND I CHATTED AND HUNG OUT, SHE NEVER SAID A WORD.
FROM WHAT SHE SAID...SHE DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE MADE CONTACT WITH THE PRESIDENT WITH THE GOAL OF GETTING AT YUUTO OR THE OTHERS.
SO THEN...
.....
IF SHE DOESN'T DO ANYTHING, THEN THE CHANCES OF HER HURTING THE CLASS PRESIDENT ARE LIKELY PRETTY LOW.
...IS SHE JUST SECURING A HIDING PLACE LIKE WITH THE GYM?

WHY, IF IT IS NOT RINKO. HOW RARE.
HIMARI ...
WHO IS THIS IN MY SUN-BASKING SPOT?
MUKU (RISE)
むくっ
BUT I CAN'T JUST NOT DO ANY-THING ABOUT IT.
DID YOU FIND RINKO?
KAN
カン
KAN (CLANG)
カーン
HI-MA-RI.
!
...AH.

BASH! (SMACK)
WELL, THEN, WE WILL BE UNDERTAKING OUR AFTER-SCHOOL, EXTRACURRICULAR LESSON NOW.
YEAH, YEAH.
WAIT, YUUTO.
TODAY, WHY DON'T YOU...
...SPAR WITH ME?
HUH!?

R-RINKO, WHAT ARE YOU SAYING ...?
...TRY IT, YOUNG LORD.
FOR A FEMALE DIVER-SION.
THESE RIBBONS BELONG TO ME AND YUUTO...
FINE, THEN HOW ABOUT JUST LIKE WITH HIMARI, THE RULE IS I NEED TO SNATCH YOUR RIBBON WITHIN A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF TIME?
GU (PRESS)
GU
KOKI (CRACK)
NO.
... YOU'RE RIGHT, SORRY.
SO?
WHOEVER TOUCHES THE OTHER'S BACK WINS.
DEAL?

"I HAVE TO PROTECT YUUTO-KUN."
THAT DECISION I MADE WHEN I WAS LITTLE ALWAYS CAME BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE.
DEAL.
AND IF HE FORGOES HIS SUPER-POWERS THIS TIME, VICTORY WILL BE MINE.
Winner!
YUUTO'S NEVER ONCE BEATEN ME AT ANYTHING ATHLETIC.
START!
はぁ
BA (WHAP)
THEN THERE'S NO WAY HE CAN LOSE TO ME.
YUUTO'S GONNA BECOME A DEMON SLAYER, RIGHT?
BUT I STILL ...!

ZA (ZIP)
!!

NO... WAY.
TAN (HOP)
FUNYON (SMOOSH)
GA (GRAB)

NOOOOO!!
GOKYO (CRACK)
...UH, DON'T TELL ME THIS SOFT, PLUMP MASS IS...
FUN! (SMOOSH)
FUN!
FUN!
N—
THAT WILL BE ALL!
...THE YOUNG LORD WON THE CHALLENGE BUT LOST THE MATCH.
HOW PATHETIC TO HAVE TAKEN AN ELBOW TO THE JAW

HEY, RINKO. IS THERE SOMETHING BOTHERING YOU?
YOU ARE WORRIED THAT NEXT WEEK'S PHYSICAL EXAM WILL REVEAL THAT YOUR BOSOM HAS SHRUNK, ARE YOU NOT?
AS IF, YOU IDIOT!!
...I SEE.
MAN, WHAT A CRUSHING DEFEAT.
CHUUU (SLURP)
AFTER ALL MY YEARS OF PROTECTING YUUTO, HE'S FINALLY OUTDONE ME.
FROM NOW ON, I'M GONNA BE PROTECTING EVERYONE, RINKO.
I STARTED THIS WHOLE THING WITH THAT THOUGHT IN MIND.
HIS SPECIAL TRAINING WAS NEVER JUST FOR SHOW.
THE YOUNG LORD IS MAKING PROGRESS SLOWLY BUT SURELY.
AW, IT'S NO BIG.

...THEN YOU DO IT EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE.
KYUUU (SMOOOKE)
I MEANT, I DON'T DO ANY-THING...
WH-WHAT DID YOU SAAAAAY !!?
SH-SHE'S LYING! I DON'T DO IT EVERY NIGHT!!
AS FOR ME, THANKS TO THE YOUNG LORD MASSAGING IT TO HIS HEART'S CONTENT NIGHT AFTER NIGHT, I AM MORE CONCERNED THAT MY BOSOM HAS GROWN STILL LARGER...
MUNYU (SMOOSH)
SU (SWF)
...
...I SWEAR, HE NEVER THINKS ABOUT ANY-ONE ELSE'S FEELINGS.
THE YOUNG LORD'S PENCHANT FOR BREASTS ALWAYS GETS HIM IN TROUBLE. ♡
YUUTO-OOOO!!
BYUN (ZOOM)
UH, SORRY, GOTTA RUN!

.....
ぎゅっ
GYU (HUG)
HEY, CAT PRINCESS?
WHAT IS IT?
NO NEED TO HURRY, RINKO.

THE YOUNG LORD STILL NEEDS YOU.
YOU MAY BE WORRIED OR UNSURE, BUT...
...YOU MUST REMAIN THE USUAL RINKO.
THAT IS SOMETHING ONLY YOU CAN DO FOR THE YOUNG LORD.
I ASK THAT OF YOU.
SO PLEASE DO SO.
...
WHAT I CAN DO AND WHAT I MUST.

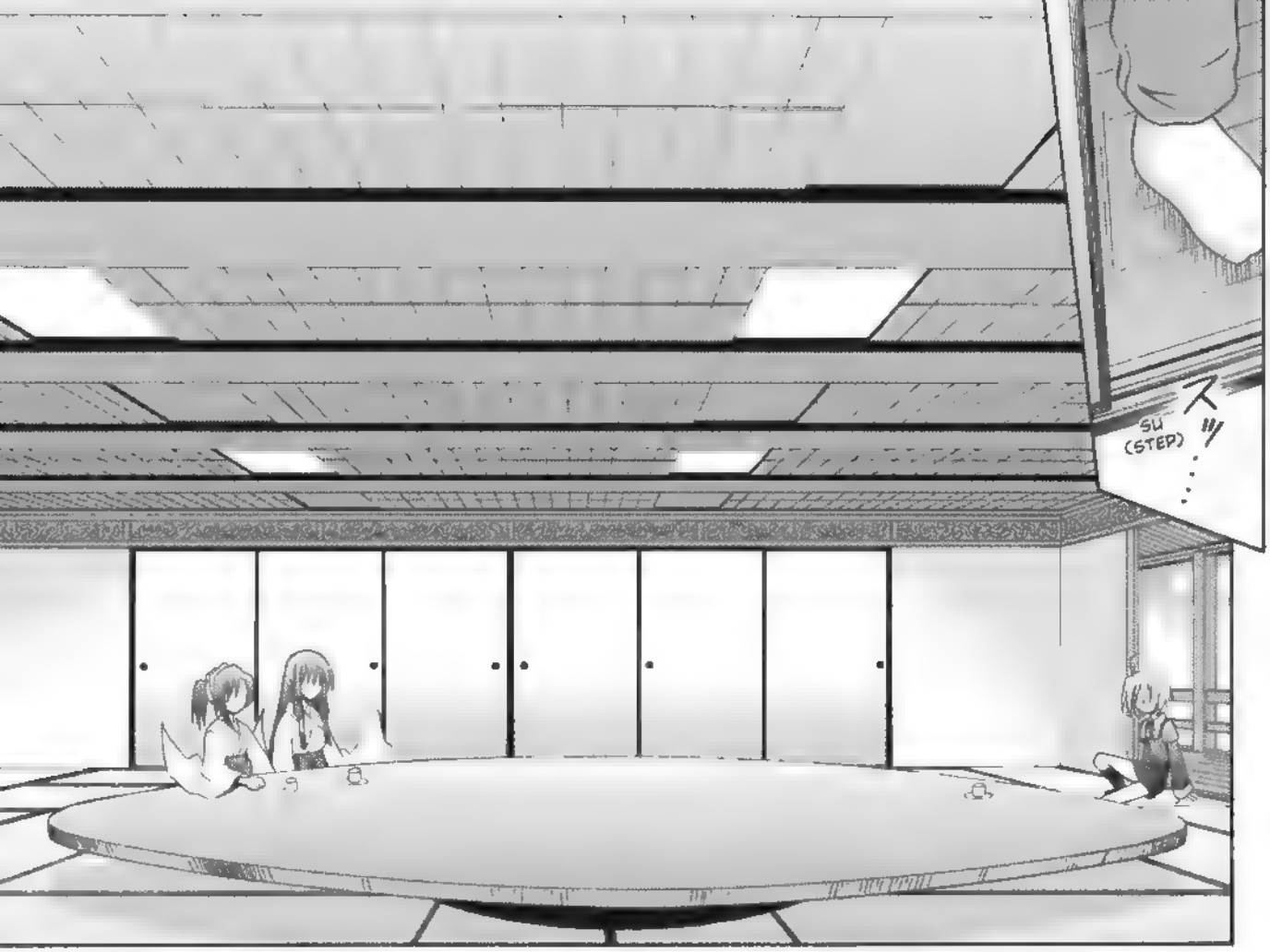
I SEE. SO YOU HAVE MADE THIS YOUNG LADY'S HOME YOUR LAIR.
...THAT MAY YET YIELD ANOTHER USE FOR HER...
...SHE IS A FRIEND OF THE YOUNG BOY.
I DON'T CARE WHAT BECOMES OF THIS GIRL, BUT...
.....
YES, I KNOW. I'VE SEEN HER BEFORE.
...TAKING SOMEBODY HOSTAGE... THAT'S NOT RIGHT, TAMA-SAN.

I HAD ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT MODESTY WAS THE TRUE STANDARD OF BEAUTY AMONG THE JAPANESE, BUT I SEE THAT HAS BEEN QUITE OVERLOOKED HERE.
WHAT A GRATU-ITOUSLY EXPANSIVE AND OPULENT MANSION THIS IS.
IT IS FILLED WITH PLACES MY EYES CANNOT EVEN REACH.
I WISH NOT TO EVEN IMAGINE WHAT THE DAILY HOUSE-KEEPING MUST BE LIKE.
...HOW-EVER...
...AYAKASHI CANNOT ENTER, AND THERE ARE NO HIDEY-HOLES.
IF CHILDREN WERE TO PLAY HIDE-AND-SEEK HERE, THEY WOULD SURELY NEVER BE FOUND, NOT EVEN WELL INTO THE NIGHT.
I FEEL LIKE QUITE THE VIP, BEING ESCORTED STRAIGHT IN.
DO YOU NOT AGREE, YOUNG LORD?
PERA
PERA (BLAB)
HI-HIMARI, THAT'S ENOUGH ...
MENAGERIE 51:
DEMON-SLAYER CAT OF THE ROUND TABLE

MENAGERIE 51:
DEMON-SLAYER CAT OF THE ROUND TABLE

I-I CAN'T HELP IT!
AND YOU'RE BEING WAY TOO CALM ABOUT ALL THIS.
YOU ARE SO STIFF, YOUNG LORD. YOU MUST NOT APPEAR MORE TIMID THAN YOUR SERVANT.
SINCE I DECIDED TO BECOME A DEMON SLAYER, I KNEW THAT SOONER OR LATER...
...I'D BE MEETING THE PEOPLE WHO STAND AT THE TOP OF THE DEMON-SLAYING WORLD, BUT...
...IT ENDED UP BEING SOONER.
I MUST SAY, IF TSUCHIMIKADO INVITED NOT ONLY YOU, BUT MYSELF AS WELL, HE MUST HAVE GAINED A FAIR BIT OF INSIGHT.
PERMITTING US DEEP INTO THE HEART OF HIS PROPERTY WITHOUT CONFISCATING MY WEAPON EARNS HIM MY RESPECT.
GU (GRIP)
HOLD YOUR TONGUE, SHIDO. YOU WILL DISGRACE THE FAMILY NAME.
AS YOU WISH.
HOWEVER, IF ANYTHING WERE TO HAPPEN, UNDERSTAND THAT HE WOULD DECAPITATE YOU BEFORE YOU COULD EVEN DRAW YOUR SWORD.
...THOSE WHO CAN FIGHT BARE-HANDED ALSO PASS THROUGH HERE, SO IT ONLY MEANS HE SEES NO POINT IN DEPRIVING YOU OF YOUR WEAPON.

AS ALWAYS, DEMON SLAYERS ARE SO TENSE WITH AN AYAKASHI IN THEIR MIDST.
WELL, I SUPPOSE I DID PROVOKE THEM.
HE MET YOU AS WELL, DID HE NOT?
HE CAME TO GREET OLD MAN GEN AT NOIHARA ONCE LONG AGO.
HM? YOU MEAN AIJI TSUCHI-MIKADO?
HIMARI, THE WAY YOU DESCRIBED HIM AS HAVING GAINED MORE INSIGHT...DOES THAT MEAN YOU'VE MET BEFORE?
IN ANY CASE, I AM SURE I WILL HEAR REPORTS FROM MR. KABURAGI OF PUBLIC PEACE.
...FINE. I WILL LEAVE IT TO YOU.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
I SWEAR ON THE JINGUUJI NAME.


SU
(STEP)

A ROUND TABLE... THEN THEY MEAN TO TREAT THE AMAKAWA FAMILY AS AN EQUAL.
WHOA...

YES... YOU ARE CORRECT.
KOSO-
(PSST)
WOW, THERE ARE EVEN SHRINE MAIDENS. THE REAL THING.

HIRA
ひら
HIRA
(WAVE)
ひら

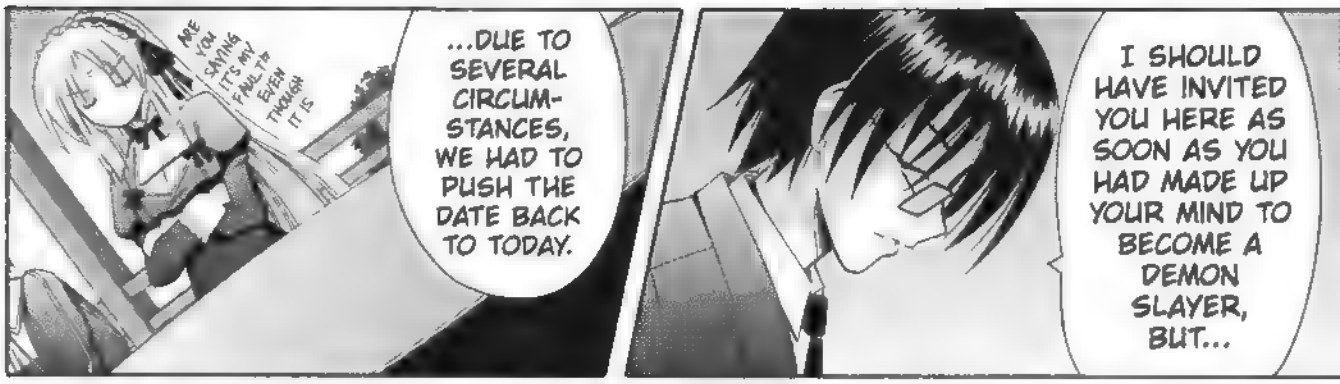
HMMM, SO YOU'RE THE FIRST RANK'S FAVORITE.
YOU LOOK LIKE NOTHING MORE THAN AN UNRELIABLE VEGETARIAN IF YOU ASK ME.
I SEE YOU HAVE GAINED EXPERIENCE AS A SMALL-FRY. THE ODOR IS MOST OFFENSIVE.
TYPICAL. YOU GAVE US THE SLIP, CAT MONSTER.
I THOUGHT FOR SURE YOU'D DIED IN THOSE FIGHTS YOU SPEND ALL YOUR TIME ENGAGING IN.
HOW-EVER HE MAY LOOK, THE YOUNG LORD IS A MEAT EATER.
HOHH ...?
MEAT ON THE GRILL IS HIS FAVORITE.
U-UM ... WHAT IS IT?
JIRO
NOW YOU SAID IT! IF I'M JUST A SMALL-FRY, THEN YOU'RE JUST A SCRAP OF DUST, YOU NASTY KITTY!!
GRRR!
HEH-HEHN!
WE SHALL SEE ABOUT THAT, LAP-DOG.
RE-STRAIN YOUR-SELF, HISUZU.

Y-YES, NEE-SAMA... ♡
ONLY THE COLOR OF HER LEFT EYE IS...?
THIS IS TSUCHI-MIKADO TERRITORY WE ARE ON.
KUH-HEE-HEE! SHE'S KASURI KAGAMIMORI FROM THE THIRD-RANK FAMILY.
SHE'S AN EXTRA-POWERFUL, BIG-BOOBED SHRINE MAIDEN WHO POSSESSES THE "BEAST EYE."
BIG...
LONG TIME NO SEE, HIMARI-SAN.
INDEED. THE LAST TIME WE MET WAS DURING OUR TRAINING MATCH, MILADY KASURI.

IT SEEMS YOUR LOYALTY TO THE AMAKAWA FAMILY HAS NOT WAVERED IN THE LEAST.
HM?
NATURALLY.
...YET YOU HAVE AMASSED A MOUNTAIN OF CORPSES, AND YOUR FEET ARE BLACK WITH THE BLOOD THAT RAN FROM THEM.
IT WILL BE NO SURPRISE WHEN YOUR POSITION EVENTUALLY CRUMBLES.
...DO YOU REALLY WISH TO DISCUSS THAT HERE AND NOW?
YOU ARE DEEPLY SINFUL.
THE STRONGER THE BOND TO YOUR MASTER, THE WORSE IT—
THAT WILL BE ENOUGH, MILADY KASURI.
YOUR WORDS STING MINE EARS, AND YOUR SERMON DOES RUN AWFULLY DULL AND LONG.
FOR ALL THAT YOU ARE A YOUNG LADY, YOU ACT MORE LIKE AN OLD WOMAN.
GRAAGH!
HISUZU...
MY SISTER'S NINETEEN YEARS OLD! SHE'S SPIRITED AND BUXOM!

MY APOLOGIES FOR MAKING YOU WAIT.
IT SEEMS EVERYONE HAS ALREADY BEEN INTRODUCED.
OH, SENSEI'S HERE.
WHAT A TERRIBLE SHAME WE WON'T GET TO SEE KASURI'S HOT BOD.
...AND WHATEVER MADE YOU THINK YOU WOULD HAVE THE CHANCE?
KUH HEE HEE
SO THIS GUY IS FROM THE TSUCHIMIKADO FAMILY, THE TOP-RANKING DEMON-SLAYER FAMILY.
MY NAME IS AIJI TSUCHIMIKADO, THE ACTING HEAD OF THE TSUCHIMIKADO FAMILY, WHICH HOLDS ALL THE DEMON SLAYERS TOGETHER.
YOU HAVE MY REGARDS.

I BET ANYTHING KUESU AND HITSUGI EVER SAID EVENTUALLY REACHED THIS GUY'S EARS TOO.
...YES.
AND IT SEEMS YOU HAVE DEALT WITH A NUMBER OF SITUATIONS AS A DEMON SLAYER.
PER THE REPORTS, YOU HAVE AWOKEN TO ONE OF YOUR ABILITIES.
SU-SURE THING.
THE OFFICIAL HEAD OF THE FAMILY IS MY FATHER, BUT DUE TO ILLNESS, I AM ACTING IN HIS PLACE.
I APPRECIATE YOUR UNDERSTANDING.


ARE YOU SAYING IT'S MY FAULT? EVEN THOUGH IT IS
...DUE TO SEVERAL CIRCUMSTANCES, WE HAD TO PUSH THE DATE BACK TO TODAY.
I SHOULD HAVE INVITED YOU HERE AS SOON AS YOU HAD MADE UP YOUR MIND TO BECOME A DEMON SLAYER, BUT...

WE WISH TO BID YOU WELCOME WITH OPEN ARMS.
HOWEVER, WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT IS THAT THE AMAKAWA FAMILY IS BACK TO FULFILL THE DUTIES OF THE SIXTH-RANK HOUSE ONCE MORE.

I'LL ABIDE BY WHATEVER MY SISTER AND AIJI DECIDE.
NONE.
ANY OBJEC-TIONS?
KUH-HEE-HEE. DON'T WORRY. I'LL LOOK INTO HIM NICE AND GENTLE... ♡
HERE IS MY MOTHER'S LETTER OF ATTORNEY AS WELL.
NONE HERE.
YOU ARE PART OF OUR CIRCLE NOW.
WELCOME, YUUTO AMAKAWA-KUN.
AND SO YOU HAVE IT.
...
AWW, GEEZ
N-NEE-SAMA...
I REQUEST SAKE.
IF JUICE WOULD DO, I COULD HAVE SOME PREPARED FOR US?
KUH-HEE-HEE. AREN'T WE SUPPOSED TO CLINK GLASSES FOR SOME-THING LIKE THIS?

HAVE YOU ANY QUES-TIONS?
UH... YES.
THAT IS BECAUSE YOU ARE THE HEAD OF THE AMAKAWA FAMILY.
NOBODY CAN CHANGE THAT FACT.
THAT WAS EASIER THAN I THOUGHT.
LIKE AS A PART OF MY DAILY LIFE.
WHEN YOU SAY DEMON SLAYER, WHAT EXACTLY AM I SUPPOSED TO DO...?
THERE ARE THOSE WHO CARRY OUT THEIR DUTIES DAILY.
THOSE WHO HOLD DOWN JOBS MAKING USE OF THEIR SPECIAL TALENTS.
AND THOSE WHO WORK DILIGENTLY ON TRAINING AND RESEARCH.
HM. IT IS NOT NECESSARILY THE CASE THAT YOU MUST FIGHT AND ELIMINATE AYAKASHI EVERY DAY.
IN AN EMERGENCY, I WILL ISSUE ORDERS, BUT OTHERWISE, YOU ARE BASICALLY FREE TO DO AS YOU WISH.

MY ONLY CONCERN WOULD BE THAT, SEEING AS HOW YOU HAVE NO RELATIVES, YOU REQUIRE A GUARDIAN.
IN YOUR SITUATION, I AM NOT GOING TO ORDER YOU TO QUIT SCHOOL AND PURSUE SOMETHING ELSE.
BUT I UNDERSTAND THAT THE JINGUUJI FAMILY HAS TAKEN YOU IN.
HUH? FOR REAL?
YOU SNEAKY LITTLE...
I-IT CAN'T BE HELPED, OKAY!?
YUU... I MEAN, YUUTO AMAKAWA HASN'T HAD ANY KNOWLEDGE OF OR ASSOCIATION WITH DEMON SLAYERS FOR THE PAST SIXTEEN YEARS.
BESIDES, HE'S MY FIANCÉ !!
HE BELONGS WITH MY FAMILY NOW!
KAAA (BLUUSH)
BA (WHAP)
OOOOH, THAT'S THE FIRST I'VE HEARD OF THIS.
THAT ASIDE, AMAKAWA-KUN... THERE IS ONE MORE THING I WISH TO ASK YOU.
ARE YOU SURE TWO OUTCASTS LIKE YOURSELVES SHOULD BE GETTING MARRIED?

EXTRA-ORDINARY POWER... HE MUST MEAN THE "LIGHT FERRY."
WHAT DOES HE WANT TO HEAR? WHAT'S HE EXPECTING ME TO SAY?
!
BIKU (JOLT)
AMAKAWA-KUN, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE EXTRAORDINARY POWER YOU POSSESS AS A DEMON SLAYER?
I'VE BEEN PUT ON THE BACK BURNER...
!!
...JUST SPEAK YOUR MIND, YOUNG LORD.
A POWER TO PROTECT MY FRIENDS.
...IT'S A POWER TO PROTECT SOMEONE.

...I SEE.
...RIGHT NOW, I'M GOING TO USE THIS POWER TO PROTECT MYSELF AND THE PEOPLE I CARE ABOUT.
KUH HEE HEE.
I DON'T REALLY KNOW HOW TO LOOK AT THE BIG PICTURE, SO...
AND WHAT IS WRONG WITH THAT?
!
WHEN YOU FIRST BEGAN TALKING ABOUT BEING A NOBODY WHO WANTS TO HELP THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD, I WAS ABOUT READY TO WRITE YOU OFF AS A FOOL, BUT...
...YOU ARE STILL YOUNG. YOU CAN ALWAYS WORK ON DEVELOPING AN EYE FOR THE BIG PICTURE LATER.

IF YOU ONLY CURBED THE IMMATURITY OF IT, IT WOULD BE A FINE CONVICTION.
HEY, THAT HURTS ...!
YUU-CHAN... YOU'RE STILL AS NAIVE AS EVER...
KUH-HEE-HEE. FOR HAVING SUCH A HOT BOD, YOU REALLY DO SOUND LIKE AN OLD GRANNY.
A GRA—
HAVE YOU EVEN SEEN HER HOT BOD, YOU JERK!?
THAT'S WHAT CONCERNS YOU, HISUZU ...!?
USE THAT POWER ...
...WITHOUT HESITATION WHEN THE TIME CALLS FOR IT.

YOU ANSWERED ME WITH A CALM LOOK.
AMA-KAWA-KUN.
YOU'VE PROBABLY SINCE FORGOTTEN, BUT I ASKED YOU THAT SAME QUESTION LONG AGO IN NOIHARA.
R-RIGHT.
LEAVE IT TO ME.
SO I'M GONNA GET REAL STRONG AND DRIVE EVERY LAST ONE OF 'EM AWAY.
IT'S A POWER TO DEFEAT ALL EVIL DEMONS AND AYAKASHI.
MEOW
BUT THE MAJORITY DROWN IN AND ARE OVERWHELMED BY THEIR VERY OWN ABILITIES.
MOST DEMON SLAYERS WITH SUCH POWERS THINK OF THEM IN SUCH A WAY. I CANNOT BLAME THEM.
A POWER TO CONQUER ONE'S FOES.

YUU-CHAN, ABOUT THAT MATTER EARLIER, I WANT YOU TO KNOW!—
KUH HEE HEE
HOW WEAK
GWAHH I KNEELED SO LONG MY LEGS ARE ASLEEP..!
GRAND-FATHER AMAKAWA, IT APPEARS HE REALIZED AS MUCH WITHOUT EVER BEING TAUGHT ABOUT THEM.

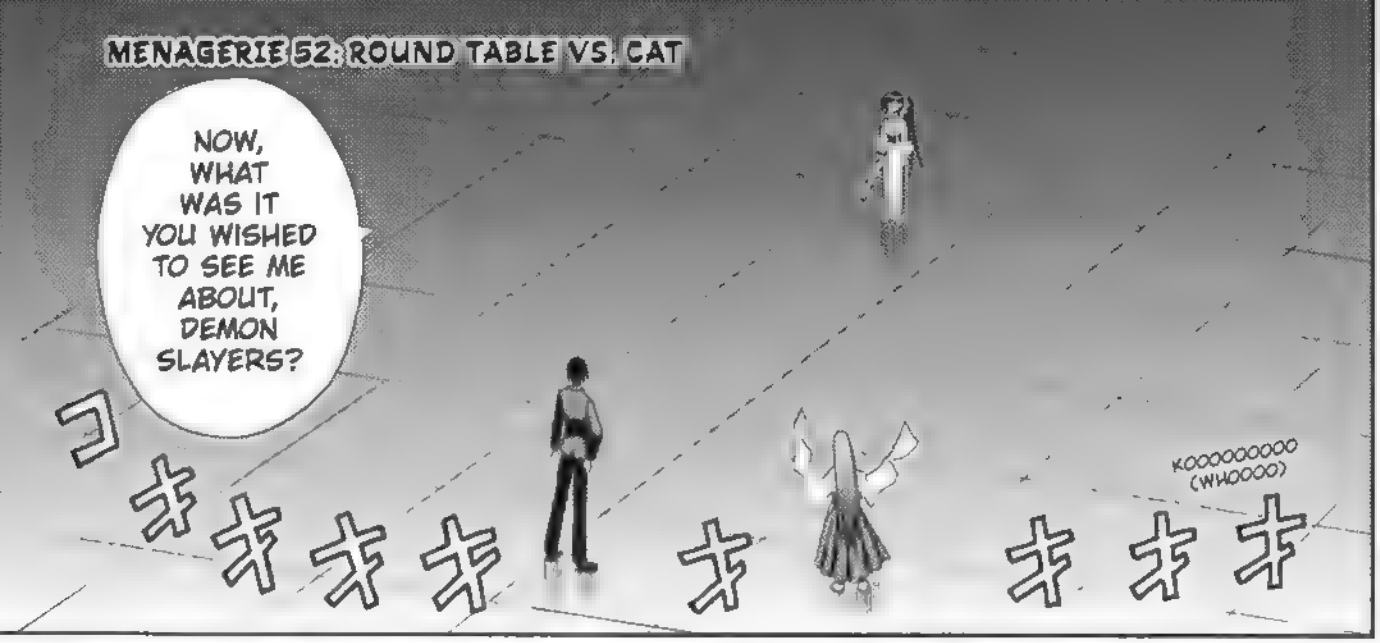
YOU DID WELL AS THE GUEST OF HONOR AT THAT RECEPTION.

THEY MAY BE A DETESTABLE LOT, BUT SO LONG AS YOU DO NOT DEVIATE FROM THEIR PATH, THEY WILL BE YOUR ALLIES.
WELL, THAT IS BECAUSE DEMON SLAYERS HAVE BEEN ON THE DECLINE FOR THE PAST SEVERAL DECADES.
THEY'RE STILL TREATING ME AS HALF A MAN, BUT I'M GLAD THEY AT LEAST SEEMED TO WELCOME ME.
HUP!

YOUNG LORD.
ALLIES... HUH?

FORGE YOUR EARLIER WORDS UPON YOUR HEART AND MOVE FORWARD.
I SHALL STAND BY YOU AS YOUR FOUNDA-TION.
HIMARI?
ふぁ…
FUWA (FLIT)
...AND WITH THAT, I WILL BE BACK.
WH-WHERE ARE YOU GOING ...?
ZA (ZSH)
THEY SUMMONED ME ALONG WITH YOU, SO THEY WANT TO HAVE A WORD WITH ME AS WELL.

HITA (PAUSE)
ひた…
YES...THE OTHER DEMON SLAYERS HAVE NO QUALMS ABOUT THE YOUNG LORD'S INNOCENT CONVICTIONS, WHICH ARE FREE OF MALICE.
ON THE OTHER HAND, THE ROOT OF THEIR TROUBLE...
...IS ME, AN AYAKASHI.


NOW, WHAT WAS IT YOU WISHED TO SEE ME ABOUT, DEMON SLAYERS?
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KOOOOOOOOO (WHOOOO)
キ
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キ

WITHIN YOU LURKS AN UNHOLY BLACK BEAST. IF IT IS NOT SUPPRESSED, IT WILL SURELY LEAD HIM TO HIS DEATH.
THIS PROBABLY CLASHES WITH HIS DESIRES, BUT WE WILL TAKE A PREEMPTIVE STRIKE AGAINST THE DANGER HIS NAIVETE INVITES.
HE IS STILL JUST A CHILD. ENTRUSTING HIM WITH YOUR REINS MAKES ME UNEASY.

THE PROBLEM LIES NOT WITH HIM.
BUT WITH YOU.
SU (SWI)
スッ

WHATEVER TRUTH THERE MAY BE TO IT, I WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF YOU DID NOT MENTION IT AGAIN.
I TAKE THOSE WORDS AS AN AFFRONT TO MY MASTER, UNDER-STAND?
HIKU (TWITCH)

KA
HMPH!
KA
KA
(CLACK)
SHA
(SWISH)
!!
WHAT!?
KIIIIN
(VWEEEE)
SHUKAKA
(CLANK)
DAMN
...!
KA
KA
THIS PENTAGRAM WILL SEAL AWAY YOUR ABILITIES.
KUH
KUH

BON (BOOM)
GAH! HAH!!
FAAAAA SSSHHH
THIS MIRROR... WILL REFLECT JUST HOW VICIOUS A DEMON YOU ARE.
RIGHT DOWN TO THE DEEPEST HIDDEN RECESSES OF YOUR SOUL.

MENAGERIE 52: ROUND TABLE VS. CAT

YUUTO AMA-KAWA.
TO BE FRANK, YOUR POWERS ARE AS OF YET NOWHERE NEAR WHERE THEY SHOULD BE FOR DEMON EXTERMINA-TION.
THERE WERE NO "HOW-TO" MANUALS AMONG THE NOIHARA DOCUMENTS, WERE THERE?
KUH-HEE-HEE... WELL, WE CAN'T EXPECT HIM TO BE AT OLD MAN AMAKAWA'S LEVEL JUST LIKE THAT.
...
HOWEVER, YOU HAVE MY PRAISE FOR HAVING DEVELOPED THIS FAR WITH NO FORMAL INSTRUC-TION.
THAT IS BECAUSE DEMON-SLAYER SKILLS ARE TAUGHT ORALLY.
...RIGHT.
...
MU (IRK)

ARE YOU WELL VERSED IN ANCIENT TEXTS?
YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO UNDER-STAND LITTLE MISS CAT GOD EVEN BETTER THAN YOU THOUGHT, SEE?
C'MON, YUU-CHAN! ARE YOU LISTEN-ING!?
HUH? YEAH, SURE.
WHEN IT COMES TO DOCUMENTS, YOU'D BE BETTER OFF RESEARCHING THE "AMAKAWA DEMON CAT" RATHER THAN THE "LIGHT FERRY."
!

IT SEEMS IT'S BEEN BUGGING YOUNG AMAKAWA FOR A WHILE NOW, BUT...
...I WONDER WHAT LITTLE MISS CAT GOD'S DOING AT PRESENT.
OR PERHAPS I SHOULD SAY WHAT IS BEING DONE TO HER.
YOU DON'T REALLY THINK SHE'S HAVING A SPOT OF TEA WITH AN OLD FRIEND, DO YOU ...?
NI (SMIRK)

DON'T TELL ME... KUESU !?
HOW SHOULD I KNOW? WHY DON'T YOU PUT A BELL AROUND THAT CAT'S NECK IF YOU'RE SO WORRIED?
BA (HOP)
HI-MARI ...!
ZA (ZSH)
!!
GOOOO (VOOSH)
ゴ
キ
キ
キ
DO YOU THINK I'LL LET YOU PASS?
KUH!!

ガコォ
GAKOO (KABAM)
DIVINE SURGE! FALLEN SAKURA!
ZA (SKSH)

YOU'D BETTER NOT LET YOUR GUARD DOWN.
THAT LITTLE SHRINE MAIDEN HAS DONE AWAY WITH A WHOPPING FIFTEEN AYAKASHI BY WAY OF MARTIAL ARTS ALONE.
SU (SWF)
!
OOOOO (WHOOOO)
...I WENT EASY ON YOU.
IF YOU GUARD YOURSELF WITH THE LIGHT FERRY, WON'T IT ONLY LEAVE A LIGHT BRUISE?
DOGA (WHACK)
ドカ!!!!
GUH! HAH!!

...YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS.
AND SHE DIDN'T JUST DRIVE THEM BACK. SHE KILLED THEM.
BEING ACCEPTED BY THEM MADE ME CARELESS.
YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT... HOW COULD I HAVE GOTTEN SO COMFORT-ABLE?
...IS A GROUP COMMITTED TO KILLING AYAKASHI WITHOUT MERCY... IF THAT'S WHAT IT TAKES.
WHAT WE HAVE GATHERED HERE...
KUH HEE HEE HEE ...!
I'LL SIDE WITH YOU ON THIS FOR FUN.
KWEEEE
HMPH!
I CAN'T BELIEVE I LEFT HIMARI ALONE WITH THEM ...!
DA (DASH)
I TOLD YOU I WOULDN'T LET YOU THROUGH!
ZA
ZA
ZA (ZIP)

...!!
DODGE IT WITH A SHORT HOP.
!!!! (VWEEEE)
IN FIVE STEPS, YOUR OPPONENT WILL LASH OUT WITH A LOW ROUND-HOUSE.
RUN STRAIGHT AHEAD.
DA
DA
DA
DA (DASH)
TAKE THIS!
LAND WITH YOUR LEFT FOOT ON THE RED YOU SEE NEAR THE BOTTOM OF YOUR FIELD OF VISION.
HERE COMES A KNEE JAB.
BYU (WHOOSH)
TCH ...!

...EH?
GU (YANK)
ZURU (SLIP)
HUH ...?
HIKU (JERK)
K—
PURIIIN (JIGGLE)
KYAAAH!!

WAIT FOR ME, HIMARI!
Y-YA-KOU-IIIN!!
AH-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA!
STRIPED PANTIES! STRIPED PANTIES!
BIKU
BIKU (JOLT)
GHHH (KREEEEE)
AAAAAAH!!

オオオオオ
(WHOOOO)
JUST AS I THOUGHT... SHE IS EVEN MORE SATURATED THAN WE IMAGINED ...!?
...!
ゴゴゴゴゴ
GO
(RUMBLE)
HEE
HEE!
...LET'S LIFT THE PRESSURE TECHNIQUE AND LET THE DEMON SHOW ITSELF WHOLE.
KA (FLASH)
BACHI (ZAP)
KAH! HAH ...!

HIMARI!!
THAT'S YOUR GOAL.
THANKS, HITSUGI!
DA DA DA DA (DASH)
— KEEP GOING DOWN.
AS YOU ARE NOW, I'M SURE YOU CAN SENSE A DIFFERENT AURA THAN USUAL, NO?
DAN (STOMP)
STOP, MASTER AMAKAWA. WE CANNOT PERMIT YOU TO ENTER HERE.
!!
YOU LITTLE BRAT ...!
MOVE!!
DON'T GET IN MY WAY. STEP ASIDE!

(GAKAKA
(KACRACK)
AAH!!
KUH!

WHAT THE —?
ドゴオ
UWAH!
DOGOO (KABOOM)
HIMARI!!

ooo (WHOOO)
DISH! (CRACK)

WHAT EVIL ENERGY... MY MIRROR CANNOT HANDLE IT ALL USING THIS INFORMAL MAGIC SEAL!
STAY BACK, AMAKAWA-KUN! SHE IS DANGEROUS!
GRRR
SHUT UP!
ZO (ZP)
PISHI (SPLIT)
BISHI
BISHI
ZC
PAAN (POP)
AAH!
ZO
ZC

ぐい
ぐい
ZOPU
(POOMF)

...WHAT ON EARTH —?
WHAT THE HELL DID YOU DO ...!?
WHAT THE HELL DID YOU DO...
...TO HIMARI !?

CALM DOWN, AMA-KAWA-SAN.
WHAT YOU SAW JUST NOW WAS THE TRUE NATURE OF THE MONSTER LURKING WITHIN HER. IT IS HER TRUE SELF!
!!
THAT CAT HAS HUNTED DOWN SO MANY AYAKASHI. SHE IS AWAKENING TO HER INSTINCTS.
AND THERE ARE STILL MANY UNCLEAR ASPECTS TO THE EVIL THAT RESIDES INSIDE OF HER.
I WON'T LET YOU DEMON SLAYERS TOUCH HIMARI!!
BA (WHAP)
...SO THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE REALLY AFTER.
DEALING WITH DANGEROUS BEASTS IN AN APPROPRIATE MANNER IS, OF COURSE, A MUST.
...IT WILL NOT DO, YOUNG LORD ...!
IF YOU COMPRO-MISE THE ORDER HERE...

KA (CLACK)
GOGA (BOOM)
...
AIJI-SAMA, ARE YOU HURT !?
NEE-SAMA!?
ガラララッ
KUH HEE HEE. NICE GOING, HERO.
SFX: GARARA (CRUMBLE)
WHAT IN THE WORLD ...!?
OOOOO (WHOOOO)

ZA (ZIP)
...YOU ARE A FOOL.
HM?
ZA
ZA
PIPE DOWN, THAT'S ENOUGH OF THAT.
!
GU (CLUTCH)
AND AFTER THEY WELCOMED YOU IN AS THE HEAD OF THE SIXTH-RANKED CLAN...
'TWAS ALL IN VAIN.
.....

ギュッ
GYU (HUG)
YOUNG LORD—
BY THE WAY, YOUNG LORD.
HM?
HOW DO YOU INTEND TO LAND?
AH...

OOF!
BYON (BOING)
SFX: HYURURURURU (ZOOOOOM)
HYAAAAH!
MIRONRI!
KUESU.
YOU SAVED US, KUESU ...
THAT INCIDENT BEFORE GOT ME THINKING.
HAHAHAHH!
HPF!
ZA (ZSH)
I'M CONSIDERING SETTLING THINGS WITH THE CAT AFTER THE NINE-TAILS AND HER ACCOMPLICE HAVE BEEN DEFEATED.
I SWEAR... YOU JUST DON'T KNOW WHEN TO STOP.

WELL, THIS IS A FORMAL REQUEST FROM THE NATION.
!
THEN PLEASE REFRAIN FROM PERSONAL BATTLES, MY LADY.
YUUTO AMAKAWA AND NOIHARA CRIMSON BLADE.
THE SUBJUGATION OF THE FAIR-FACED NINE-TAILED FOX AND SHUTEN-DOUJI...
...SHALL BE CARRIED OUT INTENSELY, THOROUGHLY, AND WITH NO MERCY.

MENAGERIE 53: CAT-SIDE CONFERENCE

IT SEEMS AMAKAWA AND HIS LOT ARE SERIOUS ABOUT TAKING HER DOWN ONCE AND FOR ALL.
WELL !?
WHY'D YOU BRING UP THE NINE-TAILS ANY-WAY!?
HUH ...
THAT NUMB-NUTS WHO COULD BARELY GIVE ME A DECENT FIGHT?
HE HAS CHANGED. DID YOU NOT KNOW?
EITHER WAY, HE IS READY TO DEFEAT THE ONE WHO THREATENED HIM AND HIS FRIENDS.
HUP!
THEN LET'S FIGHT WITH THEM!
NO WAY.
THAT NINE-TAILS AND A DEMON SLAYER... I HOPE THEY BUST EACH OTHER UP.
I DON'T HAVE TO KEEP COMPANY WITH THE LIKES OF THEM.

...EVEN THOUGH AT THE END OF OUR FIGHT, THE NINE-TAILS ACKNOWLEDGED OUR STRENGTH AND INVITED US TO JOIN HER?
WHAT IF WE WENT OVER TO HER SIDE?
AGEHA!
THERE IS NO NEED TO GO IN PERSON. THE ANTI-AYAKASHI "TWILIGHT MOON" IS WITH HIM TOO.
YOU WOULD NOT DARE.
WHAT MAKES YOU SAY THAT?
IF YOU COOPERATED WITH HIM...
...YUUTO AMAKAWA WOULD BE OVERJOYED, YOU SEE?
NII (SMIRK)
WHAT HE WANTS FROM YOU IS TO PUT A STOP TO ANY AYAKASHI WHO WOULD SIDE WITH EITHER THE NINE-TAILS OR SHUTEN.
I CAN'T DO IT ALL BY MYSELF

DON'T BE STUPID! YOU'RE NOT MAKING ANY SENSE!
YOU DUMB JERK!
WHA —!? WHY SHOULD I CARE IF IT MAKES HIM HAPPY!?
KA (BLUSH)

SO EASY TO READ ...
SO LONG AS MY BEST WILL DO, I'M GAME.
SUTA (LAND)
...OH WELL. IT WOULDN'T BE IMPOSSIBLE TO PUT A STOP TO EVERY LAST ONE.

—NOW, THEN, AS FAR AS THE NINE-TAILS AND SHUTEN-DOUJI GO...

ACCORDING TO HITSUGI YAKOUIN'S ESTIMATES, THERE'S A 98.7% CHANCE THAT THE TWO OF THEM ARE HIDING OUT HERE IN TAKAMIYA.
...
...EVEN IF WE WANTED TO FINISH THEM, WE DO NOT EVEN KNOW WHERE THEY ARE. SO DO WE WAIT?

AN ISOLATED ATTACK ON EACH OF THEM WOULD BE BEST, BUT IF THE TWO ARE IN THE SAME LOCATION, THEN THAT WILL MAKE IT DIFFICULT.
DO WE TAKE THEM BOTH ON AT THE SAME TIME... YOU KNOW?

WHAT?
AYA
SHURIN (SWF)
...DEPENDING ON HOW YOU LOOK AT IT, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE.

I SEE. IT ALL DEPENDS ON HOW CLOSELY THEY ARE ALLIED.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "CAT IN HEAT"!?
SHUTEN'S GOAL IS EITHER REVENGE ON HUMANS OR AT LEAST A FINAL BATTLE.
HERE IS WHERE WE HAVE A DIVERGENCE.
HUNGRY
CAT IN HEAT
STUD
KYU (SQUEAK)
THE NINE-TAILS' GOAL IS TO EAT HIMARI-SAMA.
"DEATH YANDERE"
KLUTZ
FLAT CHEST

*A JAPANESE WORD USED TO REFER TO A PERSON (USUALLY FEMALE) WITH AN UNHEALTHY ROMANTIC OBSESSION.

THAT'S BECOME A WORD I'VE GOTTEN SO USED TO SAYING ALL OF A SUDDEN.
BUT SINCE TALKING IT OUT HASN'T WORKED, OUR ONLY CHOICE IS TO FIGHT.
ATTACK HIM... HOW?
WORRY NOT. I WILL BUY YOU TIME.
SO THE CAT INTENDS TO USE PROHIBITED TACTICS AGAIN.

AND IF WE CAN JUST SHOW THEM WHAT WE CAN DO, I'M SURE THEY'LL...
YUUTO-SAN...
GU (CLENCH)
FINE. THEN I'LL—
YOUNG LORD...
YUU-CHAN...
PLEASE YOU DO NOT HAVE TO DO A THING.
HUH!?
B-BUT I...
YOUNG LORD, YOU ARE OUR GENERAL.
YUU-CHAN, YOU WILL ACT AS OUR HEAD-QUARTERS.
STAY BEHIND AND SIT TIGHT...
ZUZUI (LOOM)
すいっ
I BEG YOU.
...ON STANDBY.
WHAT HAPPENED TO MY RESOLVE AND NEW-FOUND STATUS ...?

*A HOUSE OF LEGEND UPON WHICH PEOPLE LOST IN THE MOUNTAINS STUMBLE. IT IS RICHLY FURNISHED AND OFFERS THE VISITOR ALL HE NEEDS TO BE REFRESHED AND START HIS JOURNEY DOWN THE MOUNTAIN ANEW.

CHAPLIN (SPLOSH)
わふぅん
CORRECT. IF WE WERE TO NOT TAKE PRECAUTIONS AND SIMPLY GO BERSERK, THE CITY WOULD SURELY BE DEMOLISHED.
PRIMARILY THROUGH YOUR DESTRUCTIVE MAGIC.
HFF!
I WILL ERECT A *TEMPORARY* SPIRITUAL REALM OVER TAKAMIYA... YOU KNOW.
THAT WAY, NO MATTER HOW CHAOTIC THINGS GET, NEITHER THE BUILDINGS NOR THE PEOPLE WILL SUSTAIN ANY DAMAGE... YOU KNOW.
SUCH CONSIDERATIONS ARE NECESSARY.
YOU'RE HERE TOO?
IT'S A VERY HIGH-LEVEL BARRIER... YOU KNOW.
AND TO KEEP THE NINE-TAILS AND HER MINION FROM ESCAPING, I'LL HAVE TO FORTIFY IT WITH AN EVEN HIGHER OUTPUT...
...YOU KNOW.
HMPH. WHEN IT COMES TO CREATING PSEUDO-DIMENSIONS...
...JUST LEAVE IT TO ME! ☆
~TWINKLE~
SO LIKE I'M TELLING YOU, USE ALL YOUR MAGIC POWER FOR OFFENSE... YOU KNOW.

YUUTO.
UNDER-STOOD. I'LL ARRANGE FOR THE WATER SUPPLY TO BE CUT OFF.
THE SAKAIGAWA THAT FLOWS THROUGH THE CENTER OF THE CITY AND ITS UPSTREAM HEADWATERS... I'M GOING TO USE ALL OF TAKAMIYA'S WATER...YOU KNOW.
YOU OUGHT TO LEARN WHAT I'M FULLY CAPABLE OF.
...YOU KNOW. ♡
OH, LOOK AT THE TIME. I HAVE TO GET CHANGED.
I MUST PREPARE MY MAGIC LIMITERS.
...WELL, I BEST BE RETURNING HOME.
KO (CLICK)

ゴゴゴゴゴ
GOOOOO (WHOOOO)
USE THE DOOR, YOU FOOL!
HOH HOH HOH! TAKE CARE.
WELL, LIZ-SAN, SEE YOU LATER.
CAT. WORK HARD, YOU KNOW.
...LIZ.
IF YOU HAVE SOME-THING TO SAY, THEN YOU SHOULD GO SAY IT.
UH...
AH... RIGHT!
OH, DEAR... SUCH A SOFTY I AM TURNING OUT TO BE.

SARUMON
LIZ?
UM...
ARE YOU TRULY GOING TO FIGHT ...?
ZA (WSH)
GACHA-GACHAK
YUUTO-SAN!
OHH DEAR. I CAN'T CONTRIBUTE IN ANY WAY...
SO... I...
GUSU (SNIFFLE)
YEAH.
AH! BUT, BUT! I COULD STUFF C-4 OR TNT INTO TEA JARS AND LAUNCH A SUICIDE ATTACK!
DON'T.
YOU KNOW

AND DON'T FORGET THE SCONES... YOU KNOW.
HAAAH. WH-WHAT SHOULD I DO ...?
ぽん PON (PAT)
YOUR JOB IS TO COMFORT, RIGHT, LIZ?
I PROMISE WE'LL BE BACK TO DRINK TEA AGAIN. SO JUST WAIT FOR US.
UNDER-STOOD.
THEN AT LEAST LET ME GIVE YOU MY SPECIALLY MADE VICTORY-FLAVORED TEA CHARM.
FLAVORED... WHAT??
きゅっ KYU (TWINGE)
...ALL RIGHT.

NN...
CHU (KISS)
NN! HFF...!
CHU...

PARI (CRACK)
B SH! (SPLASH)
NN! ♡
KUCHU (SMACK)
NOW YOU SHOULD BE SAFE ...
MM... ♡
CHU
CHUPA (POP)
GUH!! (YANK)
UWAH-WAAH!

AS YOU ARE NOT IN YOUR TRUE FORM, WHAT DOES IT MATTER IF YOU DIE ANY NUMBER OF TIMES?
I SHALL USE YOU AS A SHIELD AGAINST TAMA
GURI
...IF ANYTHING WERE TO HAPPEN TO YOU...I'D ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT SHOP WOULD BE DESTROYED, BUT...YOU KNOW.
BUT! AAH! BUT MY LIPS ARE NOW YUUTO-SAN'S! ♡
SCARY
GURI (GRIND)

SFX: GESHI (KICK) GESHI GESHI GESHI GESHI
AAAH, IT ISN'T MY FAULT!!
HOW DARE A MINOR CHARACTER LIKE YOU GET THE POPULAR BREASTS!
YOUR BOSOM IS FAR TOO LARGE!
CALM DOWN!
I'LL TURN THAT TEAHOUSE INTO A COFFEE SHOP!
DIE! DIE! DIE, YOU MELON-CHESTED MAID! YOU KNOW!

MEANWHILE, RINKO...

HM!
RINKO, SORRY FOR MAKING YOU WAIT.
AAAAAH
MORNIN', PREZ.
YOU SURE YOU'RE OKAY WITH THIS TOTALLY SUDDEN INVITE?
IT'S NO PROB-LEM!

OH... YEAH.
...HM? WHAT'S THE MATTER, RINKO?
ACK!
TAMA-SAMA SAYS SHE'S LOOKING FORWARD TO TODAY TOO.
PETA (PATTER)
たっ

THIS WON'T DO. THIS WON'T DO.
TO ACHIEVE MY GOAL TODAY, I HAVE TO...!
...!
GU (GULP)
...AND MAKE IT THE BEST DAY EVER!
WE'RE GONNA ENJOY TODAY TO THE MAX...

MENAGERIE 54:
THE MERRY ☆ MERRY-GO-ROUND OF THE SPINNING CAT

SHAAAAAA
(SSSSHHH)
ニャア
BORI
(SKRITCH)
BORI
ぼりぼり
HAAH
...
サアアアア
SAAAAAA
(SSSSHHH)

GOOD MORNING, YOUNG LORD.
GIKU (GULP)
G-GOOD MORNING, HIMARI. TAKEN TO BATHING IN THE MORNINGS NOW, HAVE YOU?
NO, THIS IS NOT WHAT I WOULD CALL A BATH.
YIKES! EVEN THOUGH WE'VE BEEN LIVING TOGETHER FOR SO LONG, I'M STILL NOT USED TO THIS...
I AM CLEANSING MY BODY TO MAKE IT READY TO WELCOME THE FINAL BATTLE, WHENEVER IT SHOULD COME.
SHA (SHWF)
EVERY DAY.

YOUNG LORD.
CAN YOU TRULY KILL THE ENEMY?
HI... MARI ?
THOUGH STILL AWKWARD, YOU HAVE RESOLVED TO BECOME A DEMON SLAYER AND LEARNED THE WAYS OF THE LIGHT FERRY AND OF WAR-FARE.
I AM PLEASED WITH THIS... BUT DO YOU NOT SEE?
STABBING YOUR SWORD INTO THE ENEMY'S BODY AND GUTTING HIM...
...TO INEVITABLY ROB HIM OF HIS LIFE IS A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT MATTER.

THOSE LIKE KUESU AND THE KAGAMI-MORI...
...WHO HAVE BEEN UNDERGOING TRAINING SINCE EARLY CHILD-HOOD, WOULD NOT THINK TWICE ABOUT IT. BUT YOU...
CAN YOU REALLY BE THE ONE TO TALK... YOU KNOW?
SHIZU-KU?
...YOU MAY BE MET WITH REGRET AND GUILT.
!!
CAT, YOU'VE NEVER BEEN PLAGUED BY REGRET OR GUILT?
THERE IS STILL SO MUCH YOU MUST LEARN.
EM-BOLDEN YOUR HEART.
...YOU KNOW?

A GOOD QUES-TION.
I DO NOT REMEMBER HOW IT WAS LONG AGO.
みよ
MYOOOOON (STREEEETCH)
ん
BAN (WHAM)
BU (SPURT)
HOW UNSEXY FOR YOUR BATTLE VICTORY PANTIES... YOU KNOW.

OH... OHH.
SEX ED CLASS HERE IN MY OWN HOME...
HYOKO (POINK)
HAAH ...
MROOOWR!
MREEEE-EEEEK!!!

TICKET
SIGN: KIDS' CLOTHES
子供
.....
PAKU (POP)
PAKU
PAKU

MOSHA (MUNCH)
MOSHA
EEEE!
GAAAAAAAAAH!

HORROR HOUSE

TAMA-SAMA! THAT'S NOT FOR EATING.
GAJ
GAJ (GNAW)

W-WE GOTTA GO, RINKO! TAMA-SAMA'S WISHES ARE ABSOLUTE!
HUH? YOU WANT TO RIDE THE ROLLER COASTER AGAIN?
KOKU
KOKU (NOD)

MOKYU
もきゅ
もきゅ
MOKYU (CHEW)
じー
JIII (STAAARE)
びくっ
BIKU (JUMP)
HUH!?
ちらっ
CHIRA (PEEK)
TOIL
...YOU SHOULDN'T LOOK INTO THE EYES OF AN ENEMY AYA-KASHI...
YOU SAID SO YOUR-SELF THE OTHER DAY.
...
AND YET TODAY...
...WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU?

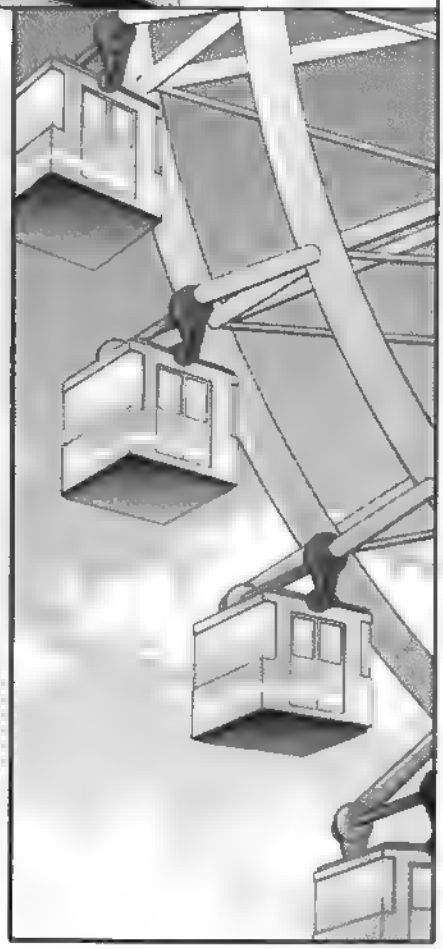
SIGN: SPECIAL EVENT / MONSTER MATRA PUNISHMENT
LABEL: TARGET
特別イベント
怪獣マトーラおしおき大
...THIS COUNTRY'S PEACEFUL.
...I DUNNO ABOUT THE PAST, BUT NOW...
...YOU'D GIVE UP THIS FIGHT.
I JUST THOUGHT MAYBE IF I COULD GET YOU TO FEEL THAT TOO...
SURE, THERE ARE THINGS THAT AREN'T GOOD ABOUT IT, BUT... THERE ARE SO MANY MORE FUN AND DELICIOUS THINGS BESIDES THAT.
AND I CAN'T GET THAT ACROSS WITHOUT LOOKING YOU IN THE EYE WHEN WE TALK.
GU (SHOVE)
HUH?
DON'T YOU LIKE IT?

...IT'S GOOD, BUT I CAN'T RECOVER MY LOST POWERS WITH THIS.
TO RETURN TO MY ORIGINAL SELF FROM THIS PIECE-MEAL FORM...
...I HAVE TO EAT AYAKASHI AND OTHER WORTHY BEINGS.
...WHY? YOU CAN'T JUST STAY LIKE THAT?
DO YOU WANNA GO BACK THAT BAD?
...IF YOU WERE ORIGINALLY A SULTRY VIXEN WHO WAS REDUCED TO YOUR CURRENT APPEARANCE...
...WOULD YOU NOT WANT TO REVERT TO YOUR OLD FORM TOO...?
SWAN
SHOCK

THANKS FOR WAITING. HUH? RINKO, WHAT'S WRONG?
BUT THOSE ARE TWO TOTALLY DIFFERENT THINGS...
THAT... MIGHT CROSS MY MIND...

FU-FU! IT'S A SECRET. ♡
WHO'D YOU HAVE TO CALL?
NAH, I'M FINE ...

HAAAAH ...



NO MATTER WHAT, I GOTTA GET HER TO DROP THE IDEA OF FIGHTING!
EARLIER, SHE KINDA IGNORED WHAT I WAS SAYING, BUT... I CAN'T GIVE UP.
THIS WORLD ONLY BELIEVES IN THOSE REALITIES THAT IT FINDS CONVE-NIENT...
THIS PEACE IS A FRAGILE THING DREAMED UP BY STUNTED BEINGS.
SHE MUST BE LIKE HIMARI OR KOFUYU-SAN SOME-WHERE DEEP DOWN INSIDE.
...LOOKING AT IT ALL FROM WAY UP HERE, IT'S EASY TO SEE.
!
THAT'S WHY I CAN THRIVE.
NO MATTER HOW FAR YOU MAY HAVE COME SCIENTIFICALLY, HUMANS HAVEN'T CHANGED AT ALL...
THIS IS BUT A FARCICAL SIDESHOW.
WH-WHAT DO YOU MEAN...?

!!
ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH JUST ENJOYABLY PASSING YOUR DAYS?
HATRED, GRIEF, JEALOUSY, HUMILIATION...
YOU DON'T KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT AYAKASHI.
THERE ARE SOME AYAKASHI WHO CAN MAKE USE OF THOSE NEGATIVE FEELINGS.
LIKE ME.

GA
(GRAB)
AGH!
BAN
(WHAM)
PRE...
SI...
STOP...

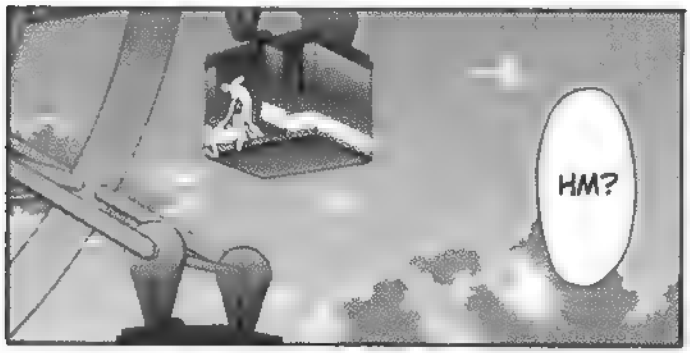
...IF I GO HEAD-TO-HEAD WITH HIMARI AND THE REST ...
...IT SHOULD ACTUALLY WORK IN YOUR FAVOR.
WHAT... ARE YOU GETTING AT?
IF I EAT THE CRIMSON BLADE AND THE JINGUUJI GIRL...
...THE DEMON-SLAYER BOY WILL BE ALL YOURS.
!!!
.....
...DON'T YOU DARE TAKE ME FOR A FOOL!

I DON'T CARE HOW STRONG YOU ARE. DON'T YOU DARE THINK YOU CAN MESS WITH THAT SO EASY, YOU IDIOT!
CHILDHOOD FRIENDS DON'T JUST SIT BACK AND LET PEOPLE COME BETWEEN THEM!
...I'D RATHER STRUGGLE AGAINST IT WITH ALL MY MIGHT, EVEN IF I LOOK LAME DOING IT!!
IF IT MEANS STANDING IN FRONT OF YUUTO WITH A GUILTY CON-SCIENCE ...
I'M NOT FALLING FOR YOUR BULLSHIT!
...'COS THAT'S WHAT MAKES ME RINKO KUZAKI!
I DON'T CARE IF I'M STUPID OR DON'T KNOW HOW TO GET AHEAD...

SNAP OUT OF IT AND TEACH THIS LITTLE BRAT A GOOD LESSON!
PREZ! DON'T LISTEN TO WHAT THIS CREEP TELLS YOU!
RIN...
KIN (GLINT)
WAKE UP!
YUU SHIMA-MURA!!
...NOW MIGHT NOT BE THE BEST TIME TO SNAP OUT OF IT.
WHOA, YOU'RE HEAVY!
...UH, WHAT? RINKO?
YORO (WOBBLE)
HEY, WATCH IT!!!

EVER SINCE THAT EPISODE AT SCHOOL THE OTHER NIGHT, IT SEEMS MORE AND MORE LIKE SHE KNOWS HIMARI'S STORY.
SO STAY HERE AND WATCH THE HOUSE, HIMARI.
HMPH... VERY WELL. BE SAFE OUT THERE.

I WONDER WHY SHE WANTS ME TO COME OUT TO THE AMUSEMENT PARK FERRIS WHEEL SO LATE AT NIGHT.
WHAT'S THE CLASS PRESIDENT UP TO?
SHE DID SAY RINKO WAS WITH HER, THOUGH


HM?

RINKO!
PREZ!?

...WAIT A SECOND NOW.

THE FERRIS WHEEL.
RINKO.
THE CLASS PRESIDENT.
WHAT?
WHO?
SOME-BODY!
NO CAN DO.
NO WAY.
THEY'LL FALL...
...AND BREAK...
...AND DIE.
WHY ARE THEY FALLING?
THEY'RE FALLING.
HELP THEM.
THEY'LL DIE.
DIE.
DIE.
RINKO!

HELL NO.
NOT ON MY WATCH.
DAN (DASH)
...!
WELL, WELL...

MENAGERIE 55: THE TWILIGHT CAT'S DREAM STAGE

WHEEE!
WAAAH
BON (BOOMF)
DAAAAH!!
AAAAH!
C-CALM DOWN, RINKO! IT'S ME!!
GYA-AAA-AAH!
GUDE (SPLAT)

FUWA (FLOAT)
GURI (GRIND)

NN...
PIKU (TWITCH)
...AH...
MUNI (SMOOSH)
むにむにむに
W-WE MADE IT...?
THIS SENSATION HAS ME WORRIED
OOF!
GUSHA (SMOOSH)

Y-YOU!?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE ...!?
NISHI (SMIRK)
GU (CHOKE)
GU
GA (GRAB)
GAH-HAH!!
GO (WHACK)
GU
...THAT'S A GOOD BOY...
YOU'VE BECOME A VERY FINE LAD.

TAMA-SAN, I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU...
...SHU-TEN.
THERE ARE ORDINARY PEOPLE JUST BEYOND THESE BUSHES
...TO FULLY RECOVER, YOU HAVE TO ASSIMILATE AYAKASHI THE LEVEL OF HIMARI-SAN OR ELSE IT WON'T DO.
BERO (LICK)
KUH ...
HOW MEAN OF YOU TO STEAL A MARCH ON ME, TAMA-SAN.
ZA (ZSH)
...I'LL SAVOR YOU AS I EAT YOU UP...
...NOT EVEN... ONE TASTE?
NO.
BESIDES, THE BOY AND THE JINGUUJI MAIDEN ARE MY JURISDICTION, REMEMBER?
...AH, THAT'S A TERRIBLY DISSATIS-FIED LOOK.
むきゃ！ MUKYUUU (POUT)

...I'M OFF TO EAT THE CAT.
CLASS PRESI-DENT!?
HEY, WAIT! WHAT DO YOU—
DOFU (STOMP)
HRK!
GURAN (DANGLE)
ZA (ZSW)
...YOU'LL STILL USE CHILDISH MEANS?

ZAAAAA (SSSHHH)
...SINCE LONG AGO...
...I'VE ALWAYS ENJOYED PLAYING WITH PUPPETS...
BOY... TELL THAT GIRL FOR ME...
...TO GO AHEAD AND RAIL AGAINST FATE ALL SHE LIKES.
...UGH...
WAIT! WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH THE CLASS PRESI-DENT!?
HEY!!
JIIII (WHRRR)

CHARM HER FIRM AND STEADY FOR ME, MY DEMONIC BURIAL WANDERERS.
...THE CALAMITY-WIELDING FOX IS HEADING FOR HER LONG-AWAITED SWEET GRAPES.*
KUH-HEE-HEE-HEE. I GUESS THE FINAL STAGE HAS BEGUN.
*A REFERENCE TO AESOP'S FABLE, "THE FOX AND THE GRAPES."
COME ON, KUESU.
IF YOU DON'T FINISH UP THE PREPARATIONS, WE'LL BE TOO LATE, ACE CHEATER.
KUH-HEE-HEE
BOU (GLOW)

.....
KUH-HEE. I WISH YOU'D SHARE THEM WITH ME A LITTLE.
KUH HEE HEE HEE
KUH HEE HEE HEE
TSU (POKE)
TSU
TSU
...BUT I GOTTA ADMIT THESE R-CURVES ARE SO INCRED-IBLE, I'M JEALOUS ...
MOCHI (CHEW)
もち
もち
MOCHI
もち
MOCHI

YOU HAVE BEEN ENTRUSTED WITH WATCHING THE HOUSE. IT WOULD GIVE ME GREAT PLEASURE TO SEE IT CARRIED OUT.
DINNER WILL BE READY SOON YOU KNOW
THEN GIVE YOUR ORDERS MORE HAPPILY... YOU KNOW.
IS EATING DUMPLINGS WITH A FUNNY LOOK ON YOUR FACE YOUR CURRENT OBSESSION... YOU KNOW?
SAVE IT.
WHEN THIS LATEST CRUSADE IS OVER... WHAT WILL HAPPEN? YOU KNOW.
TO WHAT?
PI (FLICK)
YES?
CAT.

YUUTO'S EMPTY DREAM...
THIS LUKEWARM FARCE.
SO FAR, MY THOUGHTS HAVE BEEN CONSUMED WITH NAUGHT BUT PROTECTING THE YOUNG LORD.
BUT THAT HAS ALL CHANGED WITH THIS CHARADE.
SHE...IS RIGHT.
MIZUCHI... RATHER, SHIZUKU.

ON THAT STAGE FOR WHICH THE YOUNG LORD HOPES, AYAKASHI, HUMAN, AND DEMON SLAYER ARE ALL NOTHING MORE THAN TITLES.
HAVE WE NOT ALL JOINED IN WILLINGLY?
FOR US AYAKASHI WHO LIVE SUCH LONG LIVES, IT MAY BE A CHEAP SHOW THAT SIMPLY GIVES US BRIEF, CAREFREE DAYS.
BUT BEING ABLE TO SHARE THAT STAGE WITH HIM GIVES ME THE UTMOST JOY.

...YOU KNOW.
HM?
YOU ARE AN ERSTWHILE ASSASSIN. TELL ME OF YOUR OWN TRANSFORMATION.
DO YOU DISLIKE LUKEWARM ACTS? HAS THIS ALL BEEN IN VAIN?
E-EVEN CHEAP SHOWS...
...ARE GOOD EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE... YOU KNOW.
あ あ
KAAAA (BLUUUUISH)
か あ
IT'S WHEN I ACT...
...AT MY BEST...YOU KNOW.

...YOU KNOW.
YOU KNOW.
WELL? WELL?
OOOOH? OOOO-OOOH?
BIKU (JUMP)
OH REEE-ALLY?
YOU KNOO-OOW!!
I KNEW THE GREAT PERFORMER MIZUCHI-SENSEI WAS DIFFERENT WHEN SOBBING IN AN EMBRACE WITH THE YOUNG LORD.
AAAAH!
SUCH AN ACTRESS
BICHA (SPLISH)
CHON (PLOP)
PICHO (PLIP)

INDEED...
IT MAY NOT BE MUCH, BUT I LIKE THIS WORLD THAT CENTERS AROUND THE YOUNG LORD.
REGARDLESS OF WHAT MY TRUE NATURE MAY BE.
YOU KNOW!
BICCHORI (SOAKED)
...NOT TO WORRY. EVEN IF THE YOUNG LORD BECOMES A DEMON SLAYER, HE IS STILL THE YOUNG LORD.
WHY, YOU HAVE DRENCHED ME DOWN TO MY UNMENTIONABLES.
...I KNOW THAT... YOU KNOW.
ZA (SKSH)

Oh, um, Noihara-san?
It's me, Shima-mura, the class presi-dent.
YES, WHO IS IT?
C...
PIIIN (DIIING)
YOU KNOW
POOON (DONNNG)
KACHA (KACHAK)
YOUR CO-HABITATION'S BUSTED... YOU KNOW.
I'M SURPRISED IT TOOK THIS LONG TO LET THE CAT OUT OF THE BAG, YOU KNOW
CURSES .....!
HM?
MUCH OBLIGED.
OH WELL... I'LL COME WITH YOU TO SAY HELLO... YOU KNOW.

AH, MILADY PRESI-DENT.
WEARING THAT IN A BOY'S HOUSE IS CAUSE FOR SUSPICION YOU KNOW
WERE YOU NOT SUPPOSED TO BE MEETING THE YOUNG LORD...?
もそ
もそ
SFX: MOSO (FIDGET) MOSO
SFX: HITA (TMP) HITA HITA
I WAS UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT THE CLASS PRESIDENT WAS...
ひた
ひた
ひた
YES, YES. WE'RE COMING... YOU KNOW.

GOGA (CRASH)
GA
GA
WHAT !?
オ
オ
オ

TA...
MOKYU (TWINGE)
もきゅ
...IT'S MY MAD DASH FOR THE ULTIMATE DINNER...
TAMA-MO-NO-MAE!?
オオオオ
OOOO (WHOOO)

...BUT IT'S NO USE.
...THAT'S A QUES-TION FOR SHUTEN...
(WHOOOOO)
THE YOUNG LORD! WHAT DID YOU DO TO THE YOUNG LORD, YOU FIEND!?
SHE'S USING THE PRESIDENT AS A PUPPET... YOU KNOW.
...WILL BE TONIGHT'S... FEAST.
(GLOW)
YOU...
(BOOM)

TO BE CONTINUED...

VOLUME 9 BLEW RIGHT THROUGH THE BACK ALLEY OF MY HEART. ALTHOUGH I'VE BEEN WRITING *OMAMORI HIMARI* FOR OVER FIVE YEARS, NOT EVEN A YEAR HAS PASSED IN OUR STORY SINCE HIMARI CAME TO YUUTO. TIME IS MOVING SLOW AS MOLASSES. I WONDER IF I'LL EVER COME UPON BEAUTIFUL GIRLS COLLAPSED IN THE STREET TOO... IN ANY CASE, AT LONG LAST WE'LL BE SEEING THE HARD-CORE (IS THAT RIGHT?) BATTLE AGAINST TAMA AND SHUTEN. NOT EVEN I KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT (UH-OH). LOOK FORWARD TO IT!

NOVEMBER 2011, MILAN MATRA

SPECIAL THANKS TO: STUDIO HIBARI-SAMA, SHOUYOU SAIJOU-KUN, YUU SHIMAMURA-SAMA

OMAMORI HIMARI 9

MILAN MATRA

Translation: Christine Dashiell • Lettering: Keiran O'Leary

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

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